

# Data Transport System FAQ

This section answers frequently asked questions about entering data into the Data Transport System. If you do not see an answer to your question here, let us know and we will try to address it.

[Where can I find the user manual for this system?](#)

[Which SIS systems have transcript extracts available?](#)

[Where are the instructions for my SIS transcript extracts located?](#)

[Who can I contact if I have more questions?](#)

[Why does my screen look somewhat different than the screenshots in the user manual?](#)

[What student information is in the Data Transport System?](#)

[I got an 'upload failed' message when I tried loading a file. What do I do?](#)

[What file formats are accepted?](#)

[What fields pre-populate from AIM?](#)

[Why did my batch file upload result in all my records being rejected?](#)

[How do I reformat my columns in Excel to replace the leading zeroes, and which columns do I need to reformat?](#)

[How do I fix a few rejected records in a file?](#)

[How do you fix a few records with warnings in a file?](#)

[Why do we have to map the state course codes when we have local codes?](#)

[Why must we have the state student ID in the Data Transport System?](#)

[I deleted the demographic record for a student and now I can't find that student's course and assessment records in the system.](#)

[Why is my local student id number not sorting as expected?](#)

[Why would we want to extract more than just seniors' data?](#)

[I received a Warning that says one or more of my students has an incorrect Graduation Year.](#)

[Is there anything additional I need to do to ensure Special Education students can order transcripts?](#)

[What happens to students who attend my school part-time \(S students\)? Will I be expected to produce a transcript for those students?](#)

[What happens when a student transfers after I Post a file with that student's data in it, but before I Certify it?](#)

[What do I do if a student transfers to my school, and that student's former school uploaded his/her data and Posted it to the ODS?](#)

## Where can I find the user manual for this system?

The K20 web page has a link to the [user manual](#). The K20 page is located under the Reports and Data tab on the OPI website. A link to the user manual is also available from the Help Menu in the Data Transport System.

[TOP](#)

## Which SIS systems have transcript extracts available?

Infinite Campus, PowerSchool and Schoolmaster. We are working with other SIS vendors to obtain extracts.

[TOP](#)

## Where are the instructions for my SIS transcript extracts located?

Each SIS provides instructions for the Montana Transcript Extract within the SIS. For more information, please contact your SIS vendor.

[TOP](#)

## Who can I contact if I have more questions?

Anne Bauer (Business Analyst) at [abauer@mt.gov](mailto:abauer@mt.gov), Joe Hamilton (Business Analyst) at [jhamilton@mt.gov](mailto:jhamilton@mt.gov), or Jamey Ereth (Data Collections Bureau Chief) at [jereth@mt.gov](mailto:jereth@mt.gov). You can also call the Data Transport System Help Desk at 1-877-424-6681 (toll free) or in Helena at 444-3800 and choose option 4.

[TOP](#)

## Why does my screen look somewhat different than the screenshots in the user manual?

Your view is dependent on what browser you use (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Safari) and the compatibility settings you have set for your work station.

[TOP](#)



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## What student information is in the Data Transport System?

The Data Transport System collects demographic, course, and assessment data. For a list of each data element, please see the templates on our website's Data Extracts/Submissions tab located at [http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/k20.html?gpm=1\\_2](http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/k20.html?gpm=1_2)

[TOP](#)

## I got an 'upload failed' message when I tried loading a file. What do I do?

Click on the job name and review the error text to determine what caused the file upload to fail. Call the Data Transport System Help Desk at 1-877-424-6681 (toll free) or 406-444-3800, extension 4, for further assistance if needed.

[TOP](#)

## What file formats are accepted?

The Data Transport System can accept Excel (.xls), Tab delimited (.tsv), and Comma delimited (.csv) files.

[TOP](#)

## What fields pre-populate from AIM?

The following fields are populated from AIM when entering data online or if not provided when submitting a batch file:

- School System Name
- School Name
- School Address Line One
- School Address Line Two
- School City
- School State
- School ZIP Code
- School Phone
- Student First Name
- Student Last Name
- Student Middle Name
- Suffix
- Student Birthdate
- Student Gender
- Enrollment Start Date
- Exit Date
- Graduation Year

[TOP](#)

## Why did my batch file upload result in all my records being rejected?

For Course and Assessment files, the most likely cause is that the system could not find the students in the ODS. A Demographic file must be uploaded, reviewed and posted to the ODS prior to uploading any course or assessment files for a student. There needs to be a student in the ODS with whom to associate the courses and assessments records. A Change Request has been initiated for this, and is expected to be delivered in the Spring of 2016.

Another common reason is that the leading zeroes have been stripped out of your file before it was uploaded. If you open a file in Excel after generating it in your SIS, Excel will strip out the leading zeroes, and you must reformat the cells in certain columns before uploading.

For any file, you can click on the job name, and then click on the number of Rejected records. Then, click on State ID Record Results, Fatal Error. That will give you the error name and a detailed description of the error. You can click on Show, which will give you more information, including the affected Field Names, Field Values, and Error Severity.

[TOP](#)

## How do I reformat my columns in Excel to replace the leading zeroes, and which columns do I need to reformat?

To reformat each cell in a column in Excel, right click at the top of the column. Then choose "Format Cells" from the menu that appears. The Format Cells dialogue box has several tabs, the first of which is Number. On the Number tab, choose "Custom" from the Category list. When you click on Custom, a list called "Type" appears. Choose the appropriate Type, modify it as needed, and click OK.

### *Demographic File Fields*

Field Name	Requirement	How-To
School Code	4 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 000 so the format is 0000.
Diploma Type	2 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 0 so the format is 00.
All date fields	mm/dd/yyyy	In Type, choose m/d/yyyy, add characters so the format is mm/dd/yyyy.

### *Course File Fields*

Field Name	Requirement	How-To
Student Grade Level	2 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 0 so the format is 00.



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Course Code	5 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 0000 so the format is 00000.
Session Number	2 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 0 so the format is 00.
School Code	4 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 000 so the format is 0000.

#### *Assessment File Fields*

Field Name	Requirement	How-To
School Code	4 digits	In Type, choose 0, add 000 so the format is 0000.
All date fields	mm/dd/yyyy	In Type, choose m/d/yyyy, add characters so the format is mm/dd/yyyy.

[TOP](#)

## How do I fix a few rejected records in a file?

The easiest way is to fix the issues in your SIS and re-extract the entire file. When you upload the new file, do not worry about “doubling up your kids” – the student’s new information will overwrite the old. From the Submission Status screen, you can also elect to exclude the original file uploaded from the ODS and then archive it. As an alternative to uploading a whole new file, you may also enter the records that were rejected manually into the system using the online module. However, you will also need to fix those issues in your SIS before your next upload.

[TOP](#)

## How do you fix a few records with warnings in a file?

The preferred way is to fix the issues in your SIS and re-extract the entire file. When you upload this new file there should be no warnings and you can post the entire file. Do not worry about “doubling up your kids” – the student’s new information will overwrite the old. From the Submission Status screen, you can also elect to exclude the original file uploaded from the ODS and then archive it. Another option is that you can post the file with the warnings and go into the online module and call up the individual student’s record and fix the warnings manually online. Again, those issue will need to be fixed at some point in your SIS or this issue will recur.

[TOP](#)



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## Why do we have to map the state course codes when we have local codes?

Standardized course coding became mandatory in Montana in the fall of 2013. However, the system will accept local course names and local course codes through the 2014-2015 year. Validation errors will occur if state course codes are missing, beginning in the Fall of 2015. Click here to access the [OPI Course Mapping Tool](#).

[TOP](#)

## Why must we have the state student ID in the Data Transport System?

To provide consistency and minimize errors in reporting. It is a unique identifier that stays with each student throughout their MT K12 education.

[TOP](#)

## I deleted the demographic record for a student and now I can't find that student's course and assessment records in the system.

If a user deletes the demographic record for a student, the student's course and assessment records are also automatically deleted because there is no longer a student record to associate them with. All records will have to be re-entered into the system or reuploaded.

[TOP](#)

## Why is my local student id number not sorting as expected?

It is an alphanumeric sort from left to right as local id numbers can contain letters.

[TOP](#)

## Why would we want to extract more than just seniors' data?

This is a choice for every school to make. Our recommendation is that you start with the seniors. But you may choose to do one extract that sends all student's demographic data at once if it is easier. Transcripts are also available for free to non-senior students, who may use transcripts for things such as good student driving discounts, scholarships, or summer programs. The decision is yours.

[TOP](#)



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I received a Warning that says one or more of my students has an incorrect Graduation Year.

Graduation Year means the cohort graduation year, not actual. The Data Transport System checks AIM, and AIM returns the cohort year. If the school puts in the actual graduation year, and the student graduates before or after the cohort year, the system returns a warning.

[TOP](#)

Is there anything additional I need to do to ensure Special Education students can order transcripts?

Because Special Education students may wish to order a transcript for a number of reasons, the Data Transport System accommodates a number of circumstances so that no additional effort is needed. For example, the Data Transport System will accept NA as a valid value for the Class Rank, and in the GPA field, 0 is a valid value.

[TOP](#)

What happens to students who attend my school part-time (S students)? Will I be expected to produce a transcript for those students?

It depends. If a student is part-time (S enrollment) with you, and full-time at another school, the school that holds the full-time (P enrollment) is solely responsible for that student's data. You will need to coordinate with the P school to ensure the courses and grades taken by that student at your school are included in the student's transcript. If the student is part-time with you, and does not hold a full-time enrollment elsewhere, your school is responsible for that student's data. For more information about specific questions, please contact the Data Transport System Help Desk at 1-877-424-6681 (toll free) or 406-444-3800, extension 4.

[TOP](#)

What happens when a student transfers after I Post a file with that student's data in it, but before I Certify it?

First, ideally, schools will complete the Certification process in a single sitting to avoid any certification issues. However, a number of reasons could prevent this ideal from happening. If you upload and Post a file that you do not Certify before DTS's nightly process runs, the ODS will show the information you posted (the Student Address, Local ID, Class Rank, Class Size, etc.). This will be the case until one of two things occurs:



1. The receiving school uploads the student demographics in a batch file and posts it so your old data is overwritten; or
2. The receiving school manually updates the student's data using the online module.

That's the case for the Demographic file. The Course and Assessment files are tied to the student only, not the school. Previously uploaded Course and Assessment data will remain in the system as long as the student's Demographic file is not deleted.

[TOP](#)

What do I do if a student transfers to my school, and that student's former school uploaded his/her data and Posted it to the ODS?

You can overwrite the old information by either uploading this student's Demographic file in a batch file, or by manually updating the student's Demographic information via the online module.

[TOP](#)